

ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIPDate
15 JAN 1986TO: (Name, office symbol, room number,
building, Agency/Post)

Initials

Date

1. EXO/DDA

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15 Jan

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4. DDA REGISTRY

5.

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

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5	DDI				
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8	DDS&T				
9	Chm/NIC				
10	GC		X		
11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/OLL		X		
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SUSPENSE		Date _____			

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Remarks

Executive Secretary

14 Jan 86

Date

3637 (10-81)

TIMOTHY E. WIRTH
2D DISTRICT, COLORADO

COMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TELECOMMUNICATIONS, CONSUMER
PROTECTION AND FINANCE
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE,
RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

December 20, 1985

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Dear Friend:

For the past several years I have become increasingly concerned about the extent to which we, as a nation, have neglected those aspects of our economy which determine how well America can compete in world markets. In particular, I have been distressed by repeated attacks on our educational system at a time when student achievement and aptitude appear to be declining. Our country has never needed a generation of well-educated and creative graduates more than today. I believe education represents the very best chance we have of solving the myriad of problems which cloud our horizon and must become our number one national priority. It is an investment that we simply cannot afford not to make.

Yet, teachers and school districts, already struggling with too few dollars, are experiencing difficulty bringing classrooms and curricula up to the technologically-sophisticated levels required to prepare our children for the challenges of the future. Clearly, we must start using computers more effectively as learning tools in the classroom.

Because I know that you share my concern for our country's educational system and my interest in the uses of advanced technology in the classroom, I am forwarding to you the text of a statement in which I announced the introduction of the Education Technology Act of 1985.


This bill (H.R. 3326), which is modeled after the successful computer program established in Adams County School District #50 in Colorado, is an updated version of the Computer Literacy Act I introduced in 1984. As you may recall, that bill was approved by the House Education and Labor Committee and the Science and Technology Committee, but because of scheduling problems was not considered by the full House of Representatives prior to the close of the session last year.

The Education Technology Act of 1985 has three purposes. The first section would encourage the development of model educational software and direct the National Institute of Education and the National Science Foundation, through grants or contracts, to evaluate existing software and make that information readily available to our nation's schools. The second section would establish teacher training institutes designed to improve the integration of education technology into the classroom and extend technological training to adults through model programs to be offered during non-school hours. The last section would provide the most disadvantaged schools with funds to purchase computer hardware.

Our schools and teachers clearly need assistance to effectively integrate computers into educational programs. We have yet to realize the full potential of advanced technology in teaching our students the skills they will need - and that our country will need - to compete in tomorrow's workplace. By promoting quality software and teacher training, my bill will help us advance toward this goal.

Thank you for your continued interest in the quality of our nation's educational system. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely yours,


Timothy E. Wirth



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 99th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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No. 117

EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1985

Mr. WIRTH. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Education Technology Act of 1985, a bill designed to help our elementary and secondary schools use computers more effectively as learning tools in the classroom. This legislation will help ensure that our next generation of graduates is adequately prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow's technologically advanced workplace.

In January of this year, the President's Commission on Industrial Competitiveness completed a year-long study of our nation's ability to compete. The Commission's report, entitled "Global Competition, The New Reality," is a thoughtful but resounding indictment of the extent to which we, as a nation, have neglected those aspects of our economy which determine how well we compete in world markets.

In the area of human resource development, one of the primary findings of the study was that "this nation has not effectively used technology to enhance its educational offerings. Interactive computers can be powerful learning tools, yet little educational software has been developed that makes full use of their capabilities. 'Computer literacy' has become the focus of computer use in schools, yet it is the use of computers as a new and more productive way of learning that offers the greatest potential of educational technology."

To remedy this situation, the Commission calls for "sustained Federal support" for a program of research in educational software, to be funded through the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, the report recommends that teachers be trained in the use of computers as well as in the capabilities of quality software. States should be encouraged to provide such training and the Federal Government should aid in these efforts by disseminating information on available software.

Two years ago, I first introduced the Computer Literacy Act to address these very issues. In 1981, that legislation was reported by both the Education and Labor Committee and the Science and Technology Committee. Unfortunately, it was never considered by the full House of Representatives. Yet the need for the legislation has not diminished, and in many ways the arguments for its passage have grown more compelling.

In the past 5 years, the number of computers in schools across the country has risen dramatically. More than 1 million are now estimated to be in use and that figure

is expected to double in the next 4 years. While the sheer number of computers has expanded, however, the success with which they have been integrated into our education system remains doubtful. Great technical progress has been made by those teachers and students who have computer access, but as the President's Commission report emphasizes, teachers are still not adequately equipped to tap the vast educational potential of computer technology. If "computer literacy" is no longer adequate to ensure that America has a technologically prepared workforce to carry us into the 21st century, then we must strive for the complete and interactive integration of advanced technology into educational curricula.

Finally, recent studies indicate that schools with the highest proportion of low-income children are still losing ground in the effort to reduce student-to-computer ratios. Students in school districts with the lowest poverty levels are estimated to average one computer for every 57 students while those schools with the highest poverty levels tend to have one computer for every 83 students. Educators across the country express concern about the fate of these "computer have-nots" whose school districts lack funds for sufficient computer equipment and whose parents cannot afford to buy home computers.

In short, without some type of corrective intervention, tomorrow's workers may not be prepared to enter a workplace where technological change has become the rule rather than the exception.

For these reasons, I have introduced the Education Technology Act of 1985, an updated version of the Computer Literacy Act of the 98th Congress. The bill has three purposes. Section I would encourage the development of model educational software and call upon the National Institute of Education and the National Science Foundation, through grants or contracts, to evaluate existing software and make that information readily available to our nation's school districts. The second section would establish teacher training institutes to improve the integration of education technology into the classroom and would extend technological training to adults through model programs to be offered during non-school hours. The last section of the bill would provide schools still without access to computers with the funds to purchase computer hardware.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage our colleagues in the House to give this bill their strong support so that we can begin, as a nation, to regain our competitive edge at home and abroad.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

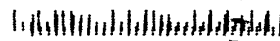
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